

In the Matter Of:

THOMAS v

STITT

DEBORAH ROMINE

June 06, 2024



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1 Q. Okay. One of the topics that you
2 are prepared to testify about today is the
3 organizational relationship between the
4 Governor of Oklahoma, the Pardon and Parole
5 Board, the Board of Corrections and the
6 Department of Corrections as it relates to
7 pardon and parole, correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. At a high level, what role can
10 does the DOC, Department of Corrections,
11 play in the parole process?

12 A. Can you tell me what you mean "at
13 a high level"?

14 Q. Can you just describe in your
15 words what role the Department of
16 Corrections plays in the Oklahoma parole
17 process?

18 A. Yes. We -- the Department of
19 Corrections makes offender records
20 available to the parole investigators at
21 our assessment and reception centers. And
22 based upon that information, the parole
23 investigator determines a parole date for
24 the offenders.

25 The Department of Corrections, the

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1 down a little bit.

2 So in the first instance, DOC

3 makes offender records available to the

4 parole investigator, right?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. And then based on that

7 information, the parole investigator

8 determines the parole date, correct?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. And then DOC also provides the

11 parole investigator with housing and

12 offices to meet with the inmate, correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. And just going sequentially, I

15 think you said that if something

16 significant changes after the parole

17 investigator meets with the offender, then

18 the DOC notifies the Pardon and Parole

19 Board of that change, right?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. And then once the parole hearing

22 is scheduled, DOC is responsible for making

23 sure the inmate gets to the parole hearing

24 or makes it to the remote hearing, correct?

25 A. Correct.

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1 investigators as part are of the parole
2 process, correct?

3 A. We provide the inmate's record.

4 Q. And as part of the inmates record
5 that DOC provides to the parole
6 investigator the inmate's record of
7 completion of DOC programs?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And then another part of the
10 inmate's records that DOC provides to the
11 parole investigator is the inmate's custody
12 assessments, correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And DOC conducts those custody
15 assessments, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You're familiar with the Oklahoma
18 Board of Corrections, correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And the Oklahoma Board of
21 Corrections generally sets policies for the
22 Department of Corrections, correct?

23 MS. BRIGIDA: Object to form.

24 A. I can't testify -- I don't know.

25 Q. Do you understand whether the

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1 Board of Corrections plays any role in
2 setting policies related to parole process
3 for DOC?

4 A. I do not -- I do not know. I
5 know that there's policies, OP policies,
6 and I know that there are P policies. And
7 the P policies are directing the Board of
8 Corrections. But I honestly, I don't know
9 the functions of the Board of Corrections.

10 Q. Do you understand that Topic 5,
11 which you are designated to testify about
12 today, relates to the organizational
13 relationship between the governor, the
14 Pardon and Parole Board, the Board of
15 Corrections and the Department of
16 Corrections as it relates to the pardon and
17 parole process?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And so are you not prepared to
20 testify today about the role that the Board
21 of Corrections plays in the parole process?

22 MS. BRIGIDA: Object to form.

23 A. I'm not aware of the Pardon and
24 Parole Board's active involvement in the
25 parole process.

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1 decisions with respect to parole for
2 violent offenders?

3 A. The governor either signs the
4 parole certificate authorizing the parole
5 or he does not sign the parole certificate,
6 meaning he's not authorizing the parole.

7 Q. Other than not signing the parole
8 certificate, does the governor indicate
9 anything about his reasons for denying
10 parole?

11 MS. BRIGIDA: Object to form.

12 A. I have -- the Department of
13 Corrections is only advised approved or
14 denied. We -- if there are reasons given
15 for approval or denied, a denial, those
16 reasons are not conveyed to the Department
17 of Corrections.

18 Q. Does DOC have any direct
19 interaction with the Governor's Office with
20 respect to parole decisions?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Who interacts with the Governor's
23 Office with respect to parole decisions?

24 MS. BRIGIDA: Object to form.

25 MR. LUCKY: Object to form.

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1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And then it says: The PPU
3 tracks them until they parole to CS,
4 detainer and to the street.

5 Do you see that?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And that's consistent with your
8 testimony earlier, that DOC maintains files
9 on inmates that are recommended for parole
10 and shares those files with the Pardon and
11 Parole Board, correct?

12 A. No, that was different testimony
13 about -- I was -- what you are referring to
14 is the case managers in the facility
15 maintain a file on every offender and
16 allows the Pardon and Parole Board access
17 to those files. This is --

18 Q. I see.

19 A. -- talking about something
20 different.

21 Q. And this is talking about a
22 process by which the PPU maintains files
23 specifically on individuals who are
24 recommended for parole, is that fair?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Statute 332.7, Ms. Romine?

2 A. I have read it, yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I can't say I've memorized it,
5 but I have read it, yes.

6 Q. And was this consistent with your
7 testimony that certain crimes are eligible
8 for parole at different times based on the
9 years in which they were committed?

10 A. Yes. I don't know if it's based
11 on -- let me take that back. I don't think
12 it's based on the years that -- I don't
13 know that it's based on the years the crime
14 was committed. I know that there's
15 different eligibility for different crimes.
16 So if eligibility is based on the date of
17 conviction, I'm not aware of that.

18 Q. Okay. So you just don't know a
19 whole lot about eligibility for parole, is
20 that fair?

21 A. No, I don't. No, that's not --
22 that's not -- our -- that's not Department
23 of Corrections. The Department of Parole
24 Board is the one who determines
25 eligibility.

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1 Q. Okay.

2 MS. LONG: Can we take a quick
3 break?

4 THE WITNESS: Sure.

5 MS. BRIGIDA: How long do you
6 want, Emily?

7 MS. LONG: Other than just a
8 couple of minutes is fine, however you
9 all would like.

10 MS. BRIGIDA: So you want to just
11 do five?

12 MS. LONG: Sure.

13 MS. BRIGIDA: Okay.

14 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is
15 1:44 p.m. We are now going off the
16 record.

17 (Recess taken from 1:44 p.m. to
18 1:53 p.m. CDT)

19 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is
20 1:53 p.m. We are now back on the
21 record.

22 BY MS. LONG:

23 Q. Okay. Ms. Romine, I'm going to
24 ask you a couple of questions about the
25 information provided by DOC to parole

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1 investigators as part of the parole report
2 process.

3 So you're aware that parole
4 investigators are responsible for preparing
5 an investigative report ahead of the parole
6 hearing, correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And the parole investigator
9 usually interviews the inmate ahead of the
10 parole hearing, correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And the case managers at DOC are
13 responsible for facilitating that interview
14 among other things, right?

15 A. Yes. I wouldn't -- again, I
16 don't know who is responsible for setting
17 it up. I talked to different case
18 managers, supervisors, and the parole
19 investigator in one facility they set up
20 their own meetings. But we provide the
21 file, the information, yes.

22 Q. Okay. So depending on the
23 facility, case managers may help to set up
24 the meetings or they may not help to set up
25 the meetings, is that fair?